

What type of sampling do I want to do - General or Specific?

General sampling

When you want to test across a wide area, such as an entire field or glasshouse, try to take sub-samples from different areas, such as different soil types (*Figure 2*). Try to distribute the number of sub-samples from each area according to the proportion that it makes up of the total area. E.g., if 20 % of your 100 ha paddock is black soil and 80% red soil, aim to take 4 sub-samples from the black soil and 16 from the red soil.

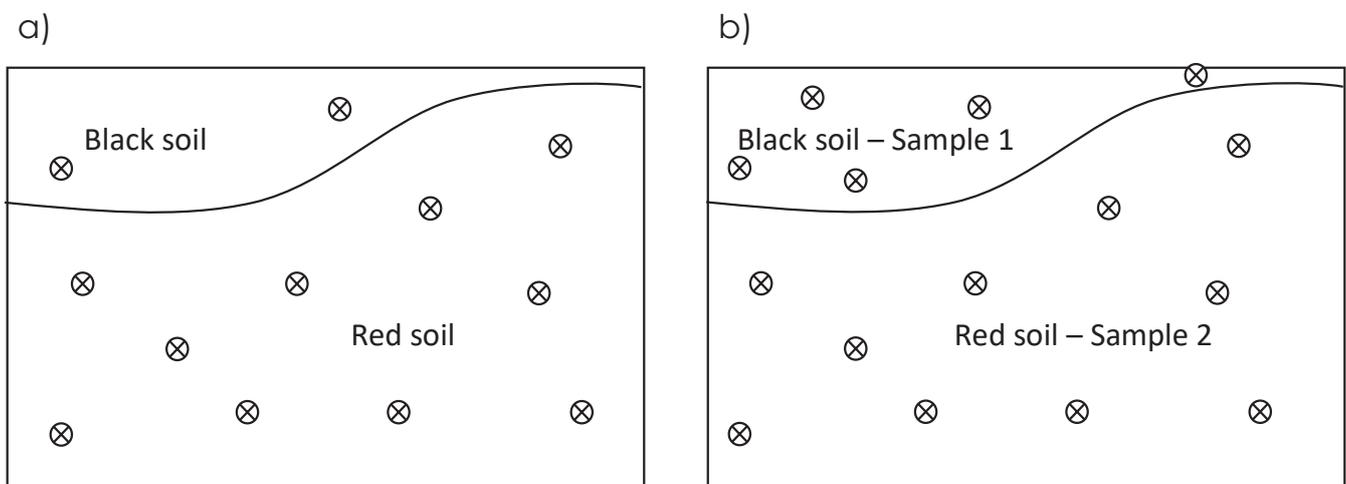


Figure 2 – Examples of a sub-sampling distributions for general (a) and specific (b) sampling. a) General sampling: 4 sub-samples are taken in the black soil area (20% of total area) and 16 sub-samples in the red soil area (80% of total area) to make one combined sample. b) Specific sampling: 20 sub-samples are taken in the black soil area to make one combined sample and 20 sub-samples are taken in the red soil area to make another combined sample, resulting in two, separate combined samples. Crossed circles represent proportionate sub-sample locations.

Specific sampling

When you want to test specific areas, such as problem zones, areas with different fertiliser, crop rotation or soil biology treatments, or different soil types, identify these specific areas and test them separately (*Figure 2*). This can help you to answer specific questions, such as:

- Is a problem zone caused by poor soil biology?
- Have different fertiliser applications improved soil biology?
- Do I need different strategies to improve soil biology on different soil types?

For example, if 20 % of your 100 ha paddock is black soil and 80% red soil; take five sub-samples from black soil areas, and, separately, eight sub-samples from the red soil areas. Mix the black soil sub-samples together into one combined sample, and the mix the red soil sub-samples into another combined sample.